

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. – 29. Canceled.

30. (Currently Amended) A method in a base station for ~~aligning~~ timing alignment of a field unit comprising:

receiving a first reverse link signal from ~~[[a]]~~ the field unit;

determining a gross timing offset with respect to other reverse link ~~channels~~ signals from other field units sharing the same reverse link logical channel;

transmitting the gross timing offset to the field unit;

following a coarse timing adjustment performed by the field unit based on the gross timing offset, calculating a fine timing adjustment based on a metric of the transmission path between the base station and the field units associated with a second received reverse link signal; and

selectively determining based on ~~said~~ the metric whether ~~said the~~ base station should control the timing alignment of ~~said the~~ field unit during a soft handover.

31. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 30 further comprising:

transmitting a message to other base stations whether ~~said the~~ base station is going to control the alignment of ~~said the~~ field unit.

32. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 31 further comprising:
reporting ~~said~~the timing offset in the form of a timing command.

33. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 31 further comprising:
causing ~~said~~the reverse link signal to be orthogonally aligned with the
signals from ~~said~~ at least one other field unit on the reverse link logical channel.

34. (Previously presented) The method of claim 33 further comprising:
determining a power level of the reverse link signal; and
providing feedback of the power level to the field unit in the form of a power
command or a power message.

35. (Canceled).

36. (Canceled)

37. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 36~~ claim 30, wherein ~~said~~
~~determination of said base station not to control said alignment is further~~
comprising initiating timing control handoff based on at least one of the following
criteria: ~~(a)~~ a metric of the transmission path between the field unit and at least one
of the other base stations exceeds a threshold for a predetermined timespan, ~~(b)~~ a
metric of the transmission path between the field unit and at least one of the other
base stations exceeds a threshold relative to a metric of a transmission path
between ~~said~~the base station and the field unit for a predetermined timespan, ~~(c)~~
a metric of the transmission path between ~~said~~the base station and the field unit
drops below an absolute metric, and ~~(d)~~ a metric of the transmission path between
at least one of the other base stations and the field unit exceeds an absolute metric.

38. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 37, wherein the metric includes at least one of the following: ~~(a)~~ power, ~~(b)~~ signal-to-noise ratio (SNR), ~~(c)~~ variance of the power, ~~(d)~~ variance of the SNR, ~~(e)~~ between the orthogonally aligned path an non-orthogonally aligned paths between the given field unit and ~~said the~~ base station and ~~said the~~ other base stations, relative ratio of the ~~(i)~~ power, ~~(ii)~~ SNR, ~~said the~~ variance of the power, or ~~said the~~ variance of the SNR, ~~(f)~~ bit error rate, and ~~(g)~~ energy per chip divided by the interference density (E_c/I_o).